

The Computer Rag

newsletter of the Yokosuka
Computer Club

News, Gossip & Innuendo from the
Western Pacific

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Ed.: Lawrence I. Charters

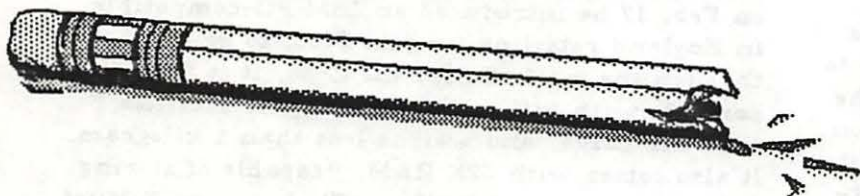
DMS Box 187, FPO Seattle 98762

Local Gossip

March meetings

YCC's Commodore Special Interest Group (SIG) will meet Tues., Mar. 3 at 6:30 p.m. in the MWR building, 2nd deck. Bulletin boards and communications are the scheduled topics.

Because of a fluke in the new YCC constitution, it looks like we are forced to have a general club meeting on the second Wed., Mar. 11, whether we want it at that time or not. To be held in the General Practice Clinic Conference Room at the hospital at 6 p.m., these are the scheduled topics: 1) fund raising; 2) spending money; 3) details on



the bulletin board; 4) classes for club members and the general community; 5) drafting people to run the SIGS and certain committees; 6) Zenith Z-248 computers at discount and 7) details on our new permanent quarters. Please attend; government by fiat only works at Italian automobile factories.

Comdex

Don't forget: Comdex in Japan '87 will be held in Tokyo's Harumi Exhibition Center Mar. 3-5. Call the editor (234-4326) if you need directions.

Complaints

Roger objected to my calling his computer an IBM PC clone in the last newsletter, claiming it is really an IBM PC compatible. He says "clone" has a derogatory meaning. O.K., I surrender: Roger's clone is an IBM PC compatible.

Wanted: SIG coordinators

We need people to act as chairmen of the Special

Interest Groups. Current and proposed SIGs include: Commodore 64/128, Amiga, Atari, Apple II, Macintosh, MSDOS, and a women's SIG.

Want Ads

Wanted: someone to demonstrate Epyx's "World Games" package. The game is a sports competition involving cliff diving, bull riding, barrel jumping, log rolling, weight lifting, slalom skiing, the Caber toss, and sumo wrestling!



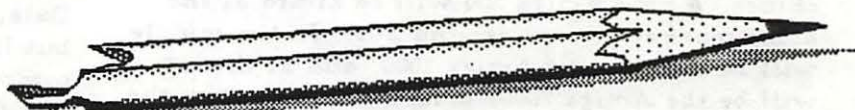
Non-Local Gossip

Lawyers get rich

Franklin, once sued into bankruptcy by Apple for its Apple II clones, is now suing Video Tech over the Laser 128, an Apple II clone. Franklin claims the Laser 128 uses the same boot routine used by Franklin. The routine was written by Michael Brown of Central Point Software (creators of all the Copy II programs). There are lots of other juicy details, but it would take a James Clavell novel to explain them all.

New IIe, sort of

Apple has redesigned the IIe, giving it an expanded 18-key numeric keypad and a platinum-colored case. Also, all IIe's will now be equipped



with an 80-column card as standard equipment.

Drukerpuffer cards

Orange Micro has released two boards of interest to almost everyone and two other products for the new Apple IIGS. The new Image Buffer is a 64K board (expandable to 128K) which fits inside an ImageWriter II and triples the buffer space. With the board in place, you could send even a long document to the printer, then use the computer for something else as the board spooled



the document out for printing.

[Note: this board is not very useful if you have a Macintosh, since the Macintosh "high quality" print is actually pure graphics, not text. One page of high-quality print on the Mac is around 200,000 bytes, so speed improvements would require a buffer in the megabyte or larger range.]

A more exotic board, Image Mate, also has a 64K buffer, but adds Epson and IBM dot matrix printer control codes, allowing you to run the printer using software normally configured for these printers while retaining all ImageWriter II features.

On the IIGS front, RamPak GS is a 512K memory expansion board which can be bumped up to 4 megabytes, allowing a IIGS to have more memory than any of the Naval Supply Center's mainframes. To keep all this silicon from melting, Orange Micro also has the IIGS Juice Box, which combines on/off switches, outlet plugs, surge suppression and a fan into one unit which clips to the side of a IIGS.

Slow Atari PC

Atari's PC compatibles, mentioned last month, may be delayed several months. They were supposed to be out in March.

Brainless laser printer

Last issue, it was mentioned Atari had come out with a \$1500 laser printer as a companion to its new Mega ST computer. As it turns out, the laser printer has a hidden "gotcha": one reason it is so cheap is that, unlike Apple's LaserWriter, it comes without Adobe's sophisticated PostScript page description language — and it doesn't have any memory or a CPU. During printing, it uses the Mega ST processor and memory.

Amiga future revealed

Commodore says it has "finally" decided how to sell the Amiga: by dividing it into three machines. A new Amiga 500 will be aimed at the home market, priced around \$600. In the middle will be the current Amiga 1000, and at the top will be the Amiga 2000, priced at \$1495. Both the 500 and 2000 will probably not appear until June.

What we really want

Colin Hunter, of Hunter Systems, has developed a program that allows 68020 systems to run PC DOS and MSDOS programs. Called XDOS, the program runs MSDOS programs without conversion. Analysts think it should be a hit. As Hunter says, "what the world wants is not an IBM PC, but the ability to run PC software."

Condensed compatible

Sir Clive Sinclair has returned to computer-



dom. According to Reuter-Kyodo news service, on Feb. 17 he introduced an IBM PC-compatible in England retailing for just \$350, to be sold through the mail. Called the Z-88, it is "the first portable with full personal computer facilities," says Sir Clive, and weighs less than 1 kilogram. It also comes with 32K RAM, "capable of storing the entire works of William Shakespeare." Must be the Reader's Digest version.

IBM 14, Visitors 3

In the 1950's, after a late start IBM managed to overtake five close rivals (called the "Bunch") and dominate the mainframe market. The BUNCH -- Burroughs, Univac, NCR, Control Data, and Honeywell, plotted revenge in the 60's, but IBM responded with proprietary (i.e.: incompatible) systems. Today Burroughs and Univac (Sperry) are UniSys, NCR and Honeywell are non-entities, and Control Data is basically a peripheral manufacturer. IBM won.

Now, IBM may be trying the same thing in the micro area. While Kaypro, Compaq, Zenith, and many others have introduced powerful new IBM PC-compatible 80386 systems, IBM has been purchasing custom-made 80386 chips, so their new machine will probably not be PC-compatible. Any day now, IBM is expected to hire Harrison Ford to track down and kill off the nasty little replicants.



\$20 mil for something

H. Ross Perot, self-made billionaire and founder of Electronic Data Systems (and recently booted off the General Motors board of directors), has invested \$20 million in Steve Jobs' Next, Inc. This gives Perot 16 percent of the company and a place on the board. Next plans to "ship something within 12 months."

True meaning

IEEE, the electronics and electrical standards group, is working on a written specification for IBM PC-compatible 80386 machines, but IBM has refused to join. One committee member says IEEE really means "IBM against Essentially Everybody Else."

Pay with DPP

Industrial Computer Products has the portable of your dreams: the Firstmate. It can run anything written for a DEC PDP-11/23, 11/73, or MicroVax II, has a Q-bus backplane, 1 megabyte RAM, disk controller, and 50 megabyte hard disk. Prices start at just \$19,995 and go to \$29,995 for the 16 megabyte version.

Waiting for D

Borland has released Turbo C for \$99. If you'd like a fast version of the third letter of the alphabet, you first need an IBM PC or compatible.

Halt or I'll terminate

Ronnie wants you to tinkle in a bottle, and Eyedentify wants you to look in a cup. Their System 7.5 is a device which scans the retina to identify authorized users. It attaches to an IBM PC, and uses a built-in 68000 processor to do the work. It is both more expensive and more powerful than the PC it is guarding.

Talk is cheap

If you want a cheap modem, Atari's new SH212 really does work with virtually all com-

puters, is Hayes compatible, has an internal speaker, is auto-dial, auto-answer using either pulse or tone, and works at 300 and 1200 baud, all for less than \$100. Now, where can you buy one in Japan?

Son of WordStar

Just a few days after mailing out the last newsletter, the editor received a letter from MicroPro which mentioned the faint possibility of a future CP/M version of WordStar. If you'd like to see such a creature, tell them: MicroPro, P.O. Box 7079, San Rafael, CA 94901.

Exciting future

Want to read about the future of computing, but don't want to be bored? Buy a copy of William Gibson's Neuromancer or Captain Zero. If an entire novel is too much, hunt down a copy of the Dec. 4, 1986 *Rolling Stone*, and turn to p. 77, "The Rise of Cyberpunk."

Household name

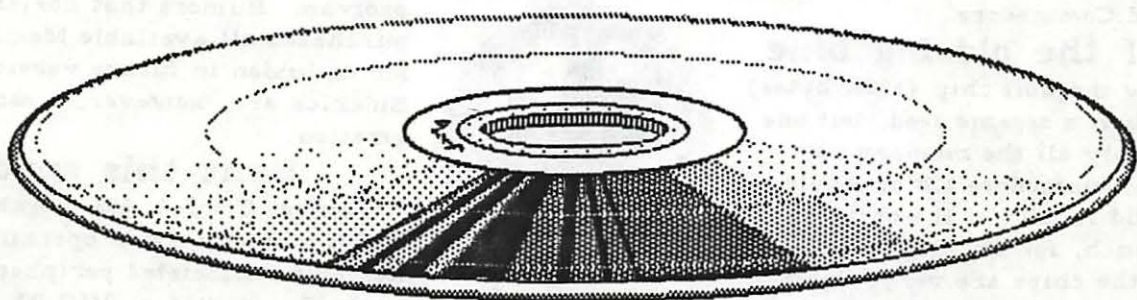
One of the hottest computers out is the Pravetz, at least in Bulgaria. Tandon sold Bulgaria \$8 million in excess 5.25" floppy drives for use in the machines.

Better never than late

Following in the footsteps of almost everyone, Datavue has introduced a laptop IBM PC, Spark, but at an unusual price: \$995. It comes with a 3.5" disk drive, backlit LCD display, 640K RAM, and dual-speed CPU. This is roughly half to one quarter the price of competing models from NEC, Toshiba, IBM, Zenith, and Grid.

Inoculate now

MUMPS, a very powerful language named after its creator, the Massachusetts University Hospital, has been adopted as a Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) language. As it already is an ANSI standard language, this means you can now use MUMPS in federal pro-



Think the Mac's 800K disk drives are too small? Lowdown will sell you 800 megabytes of storage on a write once, read many (WORM) optical disk drive for just \$7995. If you don't need quite this much space, they have a 400 megabyte version for just \$5995.



jects. There are commercial versions of MUMPS for almost all large computers, and public domain versions for CP/M and MSDOS. MUMPS is particularly good for creating large databases.

In a related move, NOHIMS (Navy Occupational Health Information Management System), which will be installed at 160 sites over the next five years, is written in MUMPS.

IBM now fruitful

Now, for \$399, an IBM PC or compatible can use the Appletalk Local Area Network system. Appletalk PC Card was released in early Feb., and requires 256K RAM and PC DOS 3.1 or later.

IBM not compatible

While some magazines seem to think the entire world is turning to IBM, a recent conference on large database design was devoted almost entirely to Digital Equipment Corporation. The reason: you can build a file on an Apple Macintosh and transfer it, unchanged, from the smallest DEC minicomputer to the largest, then pass it on to a Cray-2. By comparison, transferring a file from an IBM PC up through the minicomputers and mainframes to the very latest IBM 3090 could involve as many as seventy wholesale conversions, including changing each individual character from ASCII to EBCDIC. The moral: DEC has a standard; IBM has lots and lots of standards.

Cutting up

Tandy cut the prices on its two hot-selling IBM PC clones on Jan. 1. The 1000EX is now \$599 (down from \$799) and the 1000SX is \$999 (down from \$1199). Since Tandy can't make enough of these to meet demand (particularly the 1000SX), it's a mystery why they want to spur demand even more. One theory is to scare off retailers from taking on the new PC clones made by Atari and Commodore.

Chip off the old big blue

IBM's new megabit chip (128K bytes) is smaller than a sesame seed, but one chip can supply all the memory required for a Commodore 128 or Apple IIc. You could fit 1600 of the chips in one square inch, for 200 megabytes. Naturally, the chips are very, very, very, very expensive, and IBM presently has no plans to sell them to anyone else.

More taste, less tripe

A+, which tried for several months to run a separate Macintosh section, has given up. Mean-

while, Macworld has vastly improved their coverage, with many more reviews, more and shorter articles, and less business tripe. If you haven't seen one lately, you'll be surprised.

Samurai Mac

If you need Japanese language software for your Macintosh, Japanese Language Services (186 Lincoln St., Boston, MA 02111) may have just what you are looking for. JLS now sells EGWord 2.2, a sophisticated Japanese and English word processor, for \$399; EGBridge 2.2, which translates menus, prompts, etc., for Multiplan, MacPaint, etc., into Japanese, for \$249; JAM (Japanese Attachment for Macintosh), similar to EGBridge, for \$149; "Heaven" and "Earth," two Japanese clip art files (see mast on first page for an example) for

\$79.95 each; and MacCalligraphy, which simulates Japanese calligraphy and brushstroke on the Mac, at \$149.95.

By the time you read this —

Rumors: the new Macintosh SE, with an expansion card to run MSDOS, will come out sometime soon, priced at \$2495. The "open Mac," with lots of expansion slots, large, separate monitors, tons of RAM, a superfast CPU, etc., will be \$3895 — without the monitor. A new laser printer, using QuickDraw graphics (used in both the Macintosh and the new Apple IIGS), may come out sometime not so soon, priced at \$2000-2500. Question: what does SE stand for?

All this and more

Update: not only will Borland include Click-on Worksheet, renamed MacPlan, with the newest version of Sidekick for the Mac, they've also included Outlook, a desk accessory outline processor, and now fully support XModem protocols with their desk accessory terminal program. Rumors that Borland has purchased all available Mac software for inclusion in future versions of Sidekick are, however, a modest exaggeration.

Rent this space

Wanted: Cray-2, 256 megabytes of 64-bit memory, Unix operating system, plus associated peripherals. Will trade Toyota HiAce, VIC-20, Radio Shack Model I, and PCjr. Contact editor.

Wanted: contributions. If you have an article, or even some prepositions, you'd like to contribute, do so. We also accept money.

